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June 1989

# Statement for Management

United States Department of the Interior - National Park Service



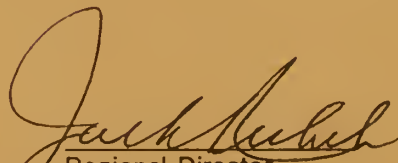
## Big Hole National Battlefield

### Definition

The Statement for Management (SFM) provides an up-to-date inventory of the park's condition and an analysis of its problems. It does not involve any prescriptive decisions on future management and use of the park, but it provides a format for evaluating conditions and identifying major issues and information voids.

Recommended by: /s/ Eddie L. Lopez 4/5/89  
Superintendent, Date  
Big Hole National Battlefield


Approved by:

  
Regional Director,  
Rocky Mountain Region

6/1/89  
Date

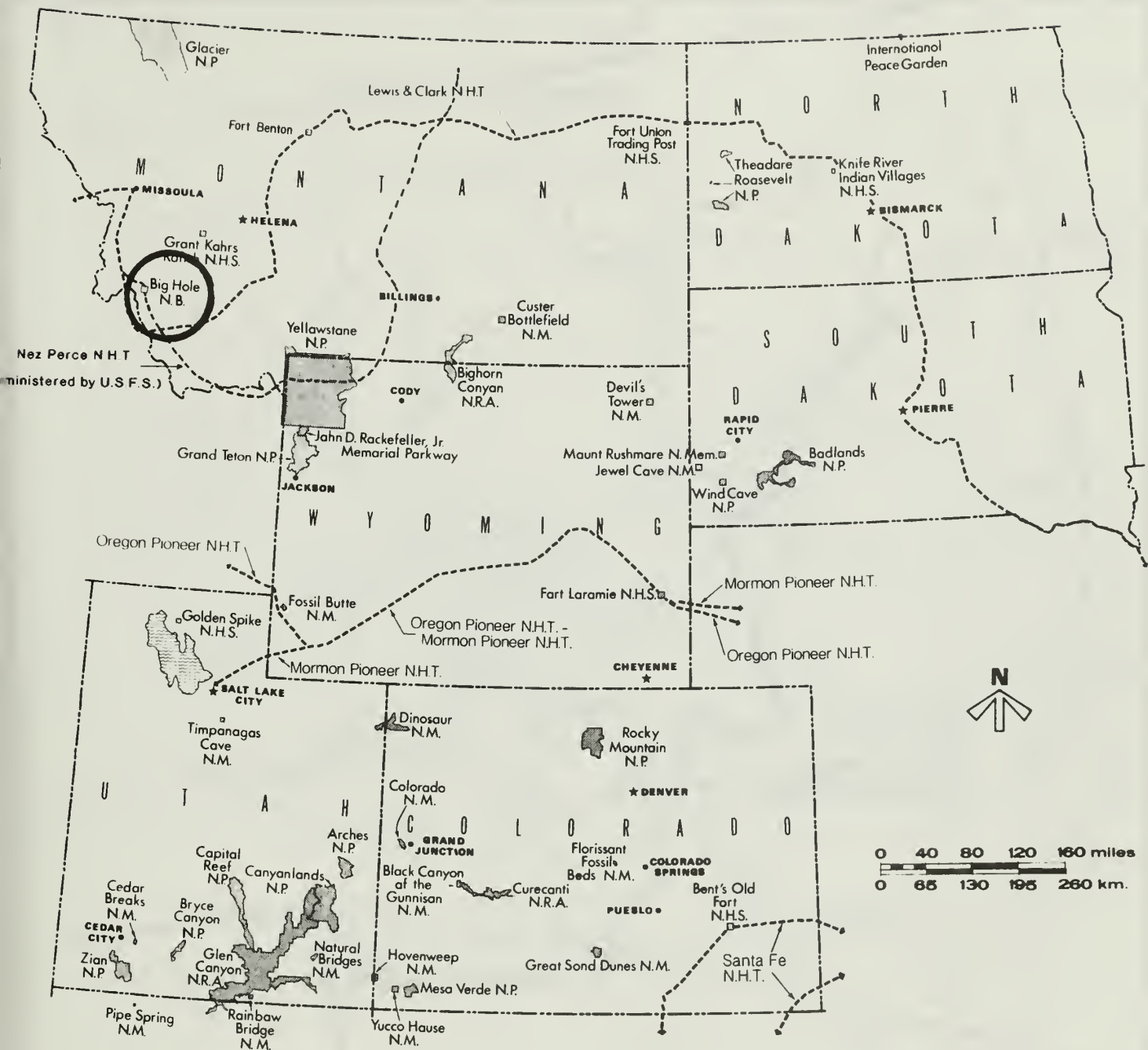
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## Legend

- Locations of Major Cities
- \* Locations of State Capitals
- State Boundary Lines
- National Park Service Areas
- National Park Service Historical Trails

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

National Park Service

United States Department  
of the Interior

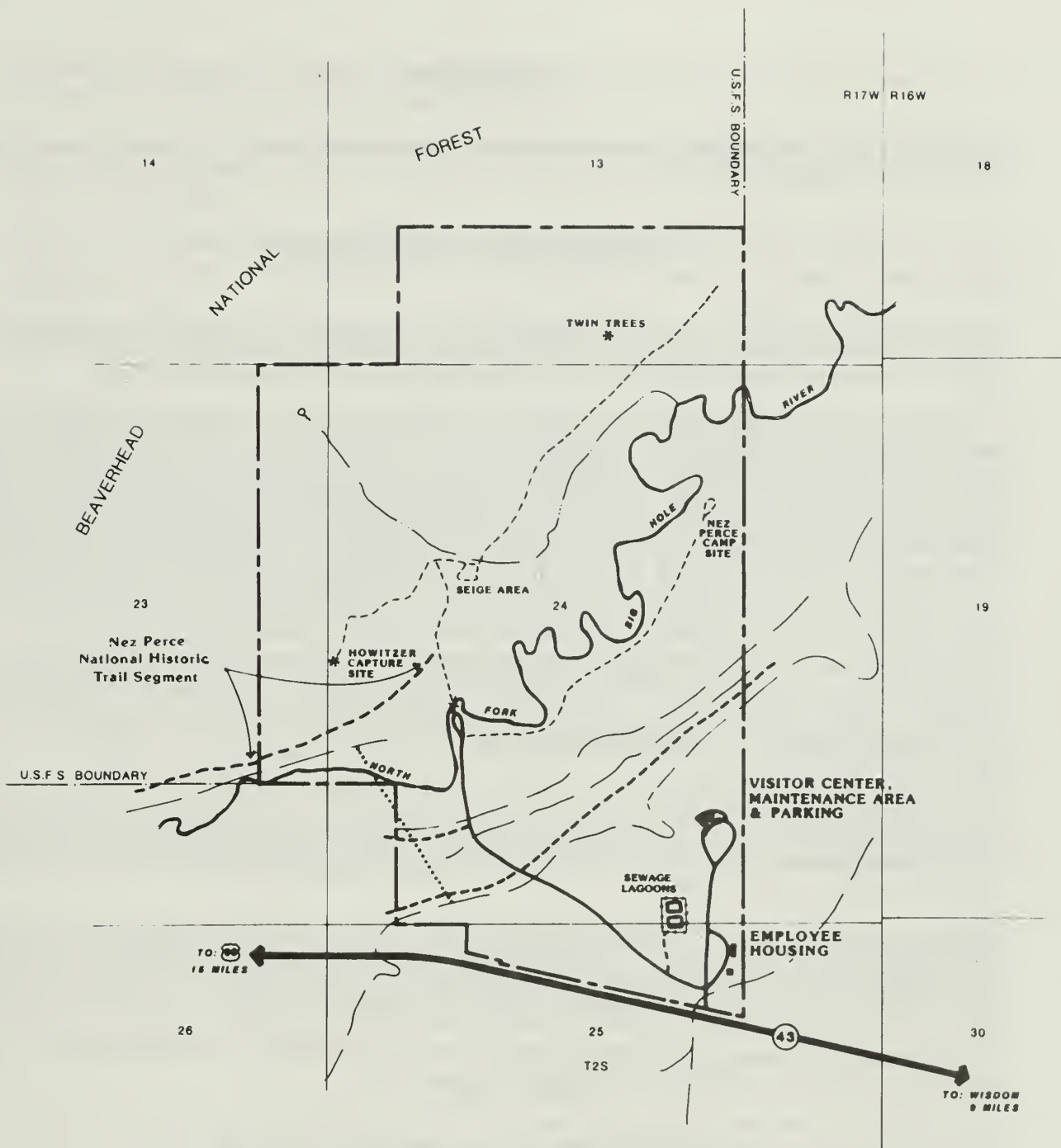




## Vicinity Map

### Big Hole National Battlefield

U.S. Dept. of the Interior - National Park Service



#### LEGEND

- NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD BOUNDARY
- PAVED ROAD
- UNPAVED ROAD
- - - TRAIL
- - - IRRIGATION DITCH
- ..... ABANDONED FLUME



## BOUNDARY MAP

### BIG HOLE NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR - NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## LOCATION

Big Hole National Battlefield is in the State of Montana, in Beaverhead County. The national battlefield lies in the First Congressional District.

## PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Big Hole National Battlefield consists of 655.6 acres of which 87 percent is in a historic zone. The battlefield began as a military reserve in 1883. It was redesignated as a national monument in 1910 and then removed from the national monument classification and redesignated as a national battlefield in 1963.

In 1883 the War Department reserved four sections of unsurveyed land "to mark the burial place of the soldiers who fell in the engagement." Executive Order No. 1216, dated June 23, 1910, ordered "...5 acres of unsurveyed land...embracing the Big Hole Battlefield Monument in Beaverhead County, be, and the same is hereby reserved for military purposes for use in protecting said monument in accordance with the act of Congress approved June 8, 1906." Public Law 88-24, enacted May 17, 1963, redesignated the battlefield as Big Hole National Battlefield "In order to preserve historic features and sites associated with the Battle of the Big Hole and to facilitate their administration and interpretation..." in accordance with the provisions of the Act entitled "an Act to establish a National Park Service"..."which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects therein and to provide for the enjoyment of future generations."

House Report No. 92-243, 92nd Congress, 1st Session, December 10, 1971, stated "The Big Hole National Battlefield preserves part of the major scene of the 1877 battle between the Nez Perce Indian bands and the Army. Unlike the scene when the tragic battle took place nearly a century ago, a peaceful, natural setting now memorializes the soldiers and Indians who died here."

Big Hole National Battlefield is a memorial to the Nez Perce bands and the soldiers of the 7th U.S. Infantry who participated or died in the Battle of the Big Hole, August 9-10, 1877. It was the turning point of the Nez Perce War, which started June 15, 1877, and ended October 5, 1877, after a war-weary trail of 1,700 miles. Its national significance is as an example of Indian-White Relations which illustrates the human price of the westward expansion of the nation.

Militarily, the Battle of the Big Hole was an overwhelming victory for the Nez Perce, who turned almost certain defeat into a clear victory. Although defeated, the Army knew full well that they had inflicted irreparable damage to the fighting abilities of the Nez Perce--the loss of 30 warriors. The Nez Perce knew that, among other matters, the loss of warriors put them at a distinct disadvantage in any future encounters.

Big Hole National Battlefield represents the "Military-Indian Conflicts" theme of the mountains facet during the period from 1763 until 1898 of the National Park System Plan.

## INFLUENCES: INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

### LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

There are no development ceilings.

Executive Order [No. 1216--June 23, 1910] reserved five acres of unsurveyed land for military purposes for use in protecting said monument.

A Proclamation [No. 2339--June 29, 1939--53 Stat. 2544] set aside 195 acres as Big Hole Battlefield National



Monument to be supervised, managed, and controlled as provided in the act of Congress entitled "An act to establish a National Park Service..." August 25, 1916.

Public Law 88-24; 77 Stat. 18, May 17, 1963, as amended by Section 101 (2) Public Law 92-272, 86 Stat. 120, April 11, 1972, appropriated sums not to exceed \$42,500 for acquisition and interests in land consisting of approximately 466 acres.

A Memorandum of Understanding dated 1987 between Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site and Big Hole National Battlefield identifying Grant-Kohrs as the administrative unit and outlining the responsibilities of each unit.

The entire park is on the National Register of Historic Places with the application recorded on August 4, 1984.

An Interagency Agreement between the USDA Forest Service Beaverhead National Forest and the USDI National Park Service Big Hole National Battlefield to: Jointly plan and execute trail development projects and public information programs regarding segments of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail; jointly plan for the recruiting and development of the YCC program when such program is available; jointly plan and execute vegetation manipulation projects, primarily through prescribed fire for the management of vegetation on both National Park and National Forest lands; and to work together in providing the general public with visitor information services and materials regarding each agency's recreation opportunities and other programs.

Letter of Understanding between the Clemow Ranch and the National Park Service to meet at least annually to discuss items of mutual interest and/or concern and for Clemow Ranch to notify the NPS one year in advance of any maintenance needed on the northeast irrigation ditch.

There are deed reservations for rights-of-way for four irrigation ditches which cross the park. Three cross from the southwest to the northeast on the southwest slope of the valley and are bounded by the floodplain and the top of the Ruby Plateau or Bench.

Ditch Number 1 is the Ruby Creek Ditch along the very bottom of the slope where it joins the plain of the valley. It is incorporated as the Ruby Creek Water Company and had been functioning decades before the specific location was acquired by the National Park Service.

Ditch Number 2 is the Trail Creek Irrigation Ditch. It was abandoned and the 2,100-foot overhead flume and trestles that had been a part of it were gone when the park acquired the land in 1963. In 1982 the Park Service received a proposal from the Trail Creek Ditch Association to reactivate the ditch. The Field Solicitor has advised that the original ditch right-of-way was issued in perpetuity and is therefore still valid. The Trail Creek Ditch Association is presently exploring alternatives, one of which would route the reactivated ditch entirely around the park, however, there has been no activity since 1986.

Ditch Number 3, the North Fork Ranches, Inc. Ditch, flows along the upper portion of the slope. It was constructed sometime after 1935 while all the land involved as part of a private ranch. The North Fork Ranches, Inc. Ditch has been in use almost annually. It has been subject to major breaks in the berm which produce extensive flood damage to the park, as well as the ditches below. The North Fork Ranch was sold in 1988. The new ranch manager plans to maintain the ditch to prevent further breaks.

Ditch Number 4 crosses a very short stretch in the southeast corner of the park at the entrance road and is owned by the adjacent ranch to the east--Mark Clemow Ranches, Inc.

A fifth ditch enters the park at the northeast corner of the park for a distance of 1,940 feet and connects with a meandering portion of the North Fork of the Big Hole River. Mark Clemow Ranches, Inc. had conducted maintenance activities on the ditch consisting of removal of vegetation and debris on the banks and channel of the ditch. Park management at the time of the improvement was not aware of the existence of the ditch or of a right-of-way. The Field Solicitor, the NPS Water Rights Division, and the Montana Department of

Natural Resources (MDNR) reviewed the records, the site, and aerial photographs. The MDNR stated: "that there has been a ditch there for quite some time...based on the photos and the size of the brush growing in the ditch, the ditch has been there longer than 35 years."

Mr. Clemow noted that the deed for the property, dated December 1, 1971, reserved "the right of the Grantors to use the irrigation ditch located on the above described property and to enter upon the property to maintain said irrigation ditch." Clemow also supplied a Claim for Existing Water Rights dated February 13, 1981, based on water rights established September 15, 1908. The document "claims right-of-way over all unappropriated lands of United States through which said ditch shall pass, together with right to repair and enlarge same whenever and wherever it may be necessary to convey water hereby appropriated."

Therefore a Letter of Understanding was signed by Monte Clemow and the Superintendent on October 6, 1988, stating "It is further understood that the Clemow Ranch will notify the NPS one year in advance of any maintenance needed on the ditch. This should allow the parties adequate time to discuss options available to achieve the desired maintenance and at the same time have the least possible impact upon battlefield resources."

The United States Government owns the subsurface mineral rights on all but 39 percent of the land (255.61 acres) which is shared as an undivided half interest with private parties.

The United States owns all the surface rights within the legislated boundaries of Big Hole National Battlefield.

Because the battle took place so many miles from their homeland, there are no Nez Perce Indian religious sites or shrines or ceremonial centers in or around the battlefield. For other tribes the area was a no-man's land, utilized only by traveling tribes on a temporary basis. Therefore the provisions of the Native American Religious Act do not apply. However, the battle is a very significant and emotional part of the Nez Perce cultural history and heritage. As such, it is park policy to exert great sensitivity to the Nez Perce Indians but not to the exclusion of others. Because of the great distance between the battlefield and the Nez Perce and Colville Reservations, contacts with the Nez Perce have been rare. The park staff makes an effort to contact the tribe to gain input and identify concerns on projects and plans that may interest them. Individual Nez Perce traveling to or through the area visit the park and may make themselves known to the staff. A seasonal cultural demonstrator position was established in 1988 and Nez Perce people have been hired to demonstrate their culture to visitors and park staff.

Big Hole National Battlefield is involved with three national trails. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail crosses over Lost Trail Pass on the Idaho-Montana border 16 miles west of the battlefield, and includes the route Clark's party took through the Big Hole Basin on the return trip. The Continental Divide Trail passes along the Anaconda Pintlar range and then along the Bitterroot Mountains on the west side of the Big Hole Basin. The trail is about seven miles west of the battlefield. More directly related is the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail which passes through the battlefield as it traces the route of the Nez Perce Indian War of 1877.

## RESOURCES

Big Hole National Battlefield is astride a western tributary valley of the Big Hole basin. The vegetation varies, from stands of second-growth lodgepole pine on the slopes of Battle Mountain (on the north) to willow swamps and grasslands on the banks of the meandering North Fork of the Big Hole River, which courses the middle of the valley. Battle Mountain forms the northwest side of the valley, while Ruby Bench forms the southeast side. Battle Mountain exposes the southeast face and is covered with a mixed lodgepole-pine forest; however, the lower slope has a treeless grassy open area approximately 95 acres in size. Ruby Bench is a tableland formation, mostly of glacial alluvial deposits, covered by sagebrush and grass. Trail Creek and Ruby Creek cross the west boundary of the park and quickly join to form the North Fork of the Big Hole River which leaves the battlefield to the northeast.



The topography of the battlefield is quite varied within the small area. The landforms of today are shaped much as they were at the time of the battle with the exception of the irrigation ditches. Regional Indians, including the Nez Perce, utilized the area as a sort of outdoor super market for their needs. Lodgepoles were plentiful, fishing potential was good, and large game animals were abundant.

From 1877 to 1986 vegetation growth and evolution made significant changes to the vegetational cover that existed during the time of the battle. Scientific and historical studies conducted in 1982 concluded that the changes were directly related to the removal of natural fires from the ecosystem. The park cultural resource management program reintroduced fire into the ecology, along with selective removal of designated trees, to recreate historic vegetative patterns. Prescribed burns were conducted in 1986 and 1988 on the battlefield and in 1987 on adjacent Beaverhead National Forest land. Approximately 8,000 trees that had encroached upon grasslands since the time of the battle were cut in 1986 and 1987. They were skidded over the snow in March 1988 and removed that summer.

The willows along the river bottom were young sprouts during the battle and easily traveled through by man and animals. This is not now the case. They are still in the same location, but the growth above ground is decadent. The willows contain large, woody growths with more dead twigs and branches than ever before. A fire record shows that fire ran through the willows about every 10 years, prior to the battle. This rejuvenated the vegetation. A prescribed fire is planned which will burn approximately 195 acres of the willows and restore them to a condition similar to that of the time of the battle.

Beaver families have built large dams that raise the water level and change the vegetation. Five beaver dams were removed in 1984 to reduce the impact on the historic scene. Beaver will continue to impact sections of the river bottom on which the battle took place. Further reductions in the number of beaver within the battlefield may be necessary. This would be accomplished in cooperation with the Montana Fish, Game, and Parks Department.

There are no rare or endangered species requiring special protection by law, though bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) are occasionally sighted. One plant found on the battlefield, the *Penstemon lemhiensis*, is listed as very scarce and receives protection from park activities. Grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) are listed as rare inhabitants of the Anaconda Pintler range to the north of the battlefield.

The vegetation management that has taken place also improved the wildlife habitat in the park. After the willow burn is completed, the park will need a long-term resource management program to maintain the approximate historic scene of 1877. Follow-up studies of the changes and recovery of the flora and fauna as a result of the reintroduction of fire into the ecology will provide valuable data on which to base the goals and objectives of the resource management plan.

Very specific attention should be given to the archeology of the battlefield. The resources are all buried and are primarily the expended cartridge cases and bullets from the battle in 1877. There are written, detailed records of the movements of the battle participants on the battlefield. The archeology of the cartridges, which were plotted on maps, revealed firing lines and other features outlining where the action took place on the ground. The careful excavation of remaining cartridges can tell us something about the battle which can be told no other way. The only historic resource above ground is a 6-ton granite monument in the Siege Area. The Cultural Resource Management Plan calls for a comprehensive archeological survey of the entire battlefield, as mandated by Executive Order 11593, with selected testing of the soldier trenches, and a search for the Nez Perce earth ovens and similar features.

A magnetometer survey of selected portions of the battlefield was conducted by Douglas D. Scott, Midwest Archeological Center, in July 1987. The survey produced mixed results, primarily identifying previously known features. Scott suggested a more economical and cost-effective means of archeological investigation may be a non-destructive, non-intrusive re-analysis of the current artifact collection and their associated records and maps.

Over 1,400 cultural items have been catalogued into the park's museum collection.

Big Hole National Battlefield is a Class II air quality area. Air quality is not monitored.

There are four historical (cultural) resource areas within the battlefield. Two related resource areas are in the adjacent Beaverhead National Forest and one on private land to the south of the battlefield.

**The Nez Perce Camp.** The fleeing Nez Perce bands set up a camp of 89 tepees late in the afternoon of August 8th. They chose a large grassy area on the east bank of the river near what is now the northeast boundary of the battlefield. The Nez Perce Camp Trail, a 1.6 mile round trip interpretive trail, tours the camp starting from the battle area parking lot.

**The Siege Area.** After the infantry occupied the Nez Perce camp, Nez Perce snipers made further possession of the camp by the military unwise. The military retreated across the river, through the willows and swamps of the Battle Zone, to an area of lodgepole pines which projects down from the mountainside. Here they set up a tight defensive square using fallen timber as breastworks. During the siege the soldiers dug pits and trenches which are still visible. The Siege Area Trail, a 1.2 mile round-trip interpretive trail, tours the Siege Area starting from the battle area parking lot.

**The Battle Zone.** The Battle Zone is the area used by the troops in route to the attack and during the retreat. The area consists of the river, willow thickets, and swamp--about 200 feet wide and the length of the battlefield holdings. The actual Battle Zone is between the Nez Perce Camp and the Siege Area. The Twin Sniper Trees on Battle Mountain are also considered part of the Battle Zone. There are no trails in the willow thickets or swamp.

**The Howitzer Capture Site.** A secondary event to the battle was the arrival of a 12-pound mountain howitzer and its subsequent capture and dismantling by a group of Nez Perce warriors. More significant was the associated capture by the warriors of 2,000 rounds of rifle ammunition near the howitzer capture site. The loss of ammunition was a disaster for the troops and a boon to the Nez Perce. Public access to the area is by way of a one mile round-trip spur trail from the Siege Area Trail.

#### **Related Resources in the Adjacent Beaverhead National Forest**

**Trail to the Battle Site.** All participants followed the same basic trail to the battle site--the Nez Perce, Colonel Gibbon, and General Howard. The Nez Perce followed a hunting party route from Ross' Hole on the west side of the Bitterroot Range, over what is now called Gibbon Pass, to the battle site. The same route was followed by the forces of Colonel Gibbon, although the infantry's passage was more arduous due to the wagons and mountain howitzer, combined with their urgency to cover the distance quickly to catch up with the Nez Perce. This route is now part of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail.

**Wagon Train Camp.** Colonel Gibbon camped for a night in a hidden ravine just off the Indian trail about five miles from the Nez Perce camp (approximately at Placer Creek). The howitzer and gun crew were left behind with most of the horses, extra supplies and the parked wagon train. The crew was ordered to depart for the battle at dawn with the howitzer and a reserve supply of rifle ammunition. As the crew approached the battle site, a group of Nez Perce warriors on horseback immediately spotted them, rushed their position, and captured the howitzer and ammunition. The Beaverhead National Forest Land Use Plan gives consideration to the protection of the scenic values of Big Hole National Battlefield and the related areas.

#### **Related Resources on Private Land South of the Battlefield**

The site of the Nez Perce camp on the night of August 9, 1877, following the battle is said to be on the Peterson Ranch, approximately 16 miles south of the battlefield. Stone rifle pits constructed by the Nez Perce were present at that site as recently as the 1960s.

Current problems of protecting these cultural resources fall into two categories. The obvious one is that of the relic hunter--the "pot hunter"--who has the means of modern metal detectors to locate the expended shells. These shells provide data for the precise location of on-the-scene actions which cannot be determined by other means. The sites on the National Forest are not expected to have many cultural



resources--such as the wagon train camp which was destroyed at the turn of the century when a gold dredge operated in that location. Within the battlefield, several action sites are basically untouched by archeological activity and require some mitigation work. Meanwhile, the park must be alert to the secret presence of relic hunters.

The second category of cultural loss is that of the destruction of ground cover that was present at the time of the battle, or ground cover which now covers and protects portions of the battlefield where artifacts may exist. Mitigating surveys and selected testing should be scheduled in these areas as soon as possible after the prescribed burns.

## LAND USES AND TRENDS

All lands within the authorized boundary of the national battlefield are in the fee ownership of the United States. The park consists of 655.6 acres. The park is 85 miles southwest of Butte, Montana, and about 230 road miles west of Yellowstone National Park.

Three elements dominate the regional economy--ranching, forest products, and recreation. Farming and mining are minimal. The battlefield and its visitation supplements the tourism business of the area and poses no competition or conflict with other sectors of the regional economy. Local interests and influence, in addition to the Big Hole basin, include Beaverhead and Ravalli Counties of Montana and Lemhi County of Idaho. Larger regional interests include Silver Bow, Deer Lodge, and Madison Counties of Montana. The battlefield is a significant historic feature for national, State, and local history. Travelers frequently coordinate visits to the battlefield with Bannock State Park or the Fort Owen and St. Mary's Mission sites in Ravalli County. The battlefield is a destination park for many regional visitors, though its visitation is mainly supplementary to other vacation activities, such as extended summer vacations, guest-ranching, and fishing. Visitation is a diversionary activity in the off-season for hunting parties in the fall and ski area patrons in the winter. In the spring and fall, the battlefield is a field trip destination for schools from western Montana and adjacent areas in Idaho.

Adjacent land use and mutual influences are compatible. Privately owned grazing land is to the east and to the south across the highway. A private campground is located near the trees close to the southwestern boundary of the park. The land adjacent to the battlefield to the north and northwest is part of the Beaverhead National Forest. The Forest Service is concerned about the visual impact of actions upon the forested slopes of the Big Hole basin in their Land Use Planning. The existence of the battlefield is considered; although, it does not necessarily change their general planning. The Forest Service is currently conducting an Environmental Impact Statement for the Trail Creek drainage to the west of the battlefield. Battlefield staff have been on an advisory committee.

Outside the southwest corner of the park, bounded by the Ruby Creek crossing of Highway 43, a small plot of land has been purchased for the development of a summer home. It is on an abandoned roadbed. Although it is not critical to the battlefield scene, it is visible from certain parts of the battle ground itself. No progress has been made on the development of that plot in the past two years.

Across the Continental Divide to the west are the Salmon National Forest (Idaho) and the Bitterroot National Forest (Montana). The National Forests offer many recreational opportunities, which generate considerable interest in the region and directly contribute to the interest in visitation of the battlefield. Overnight accommodations are available throughout the region, but with a small capacity except for the larger towns such as Butte, Dillon, and Hamilton in Montana and Salmon in Idaho. Camping areas are available throughout the region, although a number are well off the main roads. Given the existing accommodations and campgrounds there is no need to establish overnight facilities within the battlefield.

Battlefield visitation is supplemental to other regional recreational activities. The Big Hole, Beaverhead, Bitterroot, and Salmon Rivers are widely advertised for trout fishing. Hunters come for deer, elk, and moose in the cooler part of the fall. Sightseeing, pack trips, river-float trips, and guest ranches make up a significant amount of the regional recreational activities. Three ski runs with chair lifts operate in the winter: Lost Trail;



Maverick Mountain; and Discovery Basin.

Bannock State Park is within 50 miles of the battlefield. Bannock was the first Territorial Capital of Montana. Established as a mining town in 1862, it became the Territorial Capital in 1864. An extensive restoration program is making Bannock an increasing recreational attraction. There are three established wilderness areas within 50 miles: Selway-Bitterroot; Anaconda-Pintlar; and the Frank Church River of No Return. There are three wilderness study areas: Pioneer Primitive Area; West Big Hole; and the Salmon Breaks Primitive Area.

## **VISITOR USE ANALYSIS**

Visitors enter the southeast corner on Ruby Bench and drive to the visitor center, which overlooks the battlefield in the valley below. A side road provides access to a parking area on the valley floor from which short walks lead to the Siege Area, Howitzer Capture Site, Nez Perce Camp Trail, and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

Only 18 percent of the visitors to the battlefield fail to go to the visitor center. Most of those visitors arrive after hours. Of the visitors who do enter the battlefield, 82 percent go to the visitor center to see the exhibits and listen to the audio stations. Approximately 76 percent see the audiovisual program. Visitor use has remained relatively constant over the past several years.

Peak visitation is from May through September when the visitor center is open 12 hours a day. The rest of the year the visitor center is open 8½ hours a day. The road to the Battle Area is closed in the winter due to snow. The average visitor stays from one to four hours per visit. The peak visitation year to date was 1978, with 53,129 visitors.

Montanans account for 30 percent of the visitors, while visitors from Idaho, California, and Washington make up from 8 percent to 13 percent each. Oregon, Utah, Colorado, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Arizona account for 2 percent to 4 percent each. Texas, Wyoming, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Nevada account for another 1 percent each. These trends have been consistent for the past four years.

## **FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT ANALYSIS**

### **Nonhistoric Roads and Trails**

Paved road	2.0 miles
Unpaved road	.1 miles
Primitive road	.8 miles
Trails	2.2 miles
Parking area	60 cars

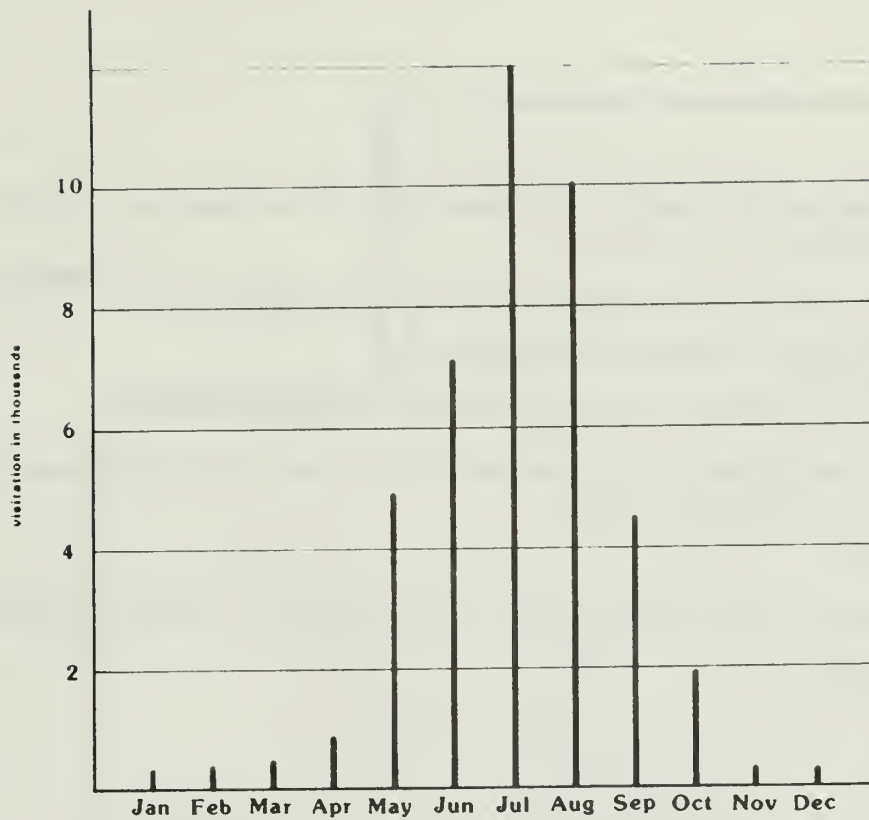
One foot bridge crosses the North Fork of the Big Hole River.

### **Nonhistoric Buildings and Facilities**

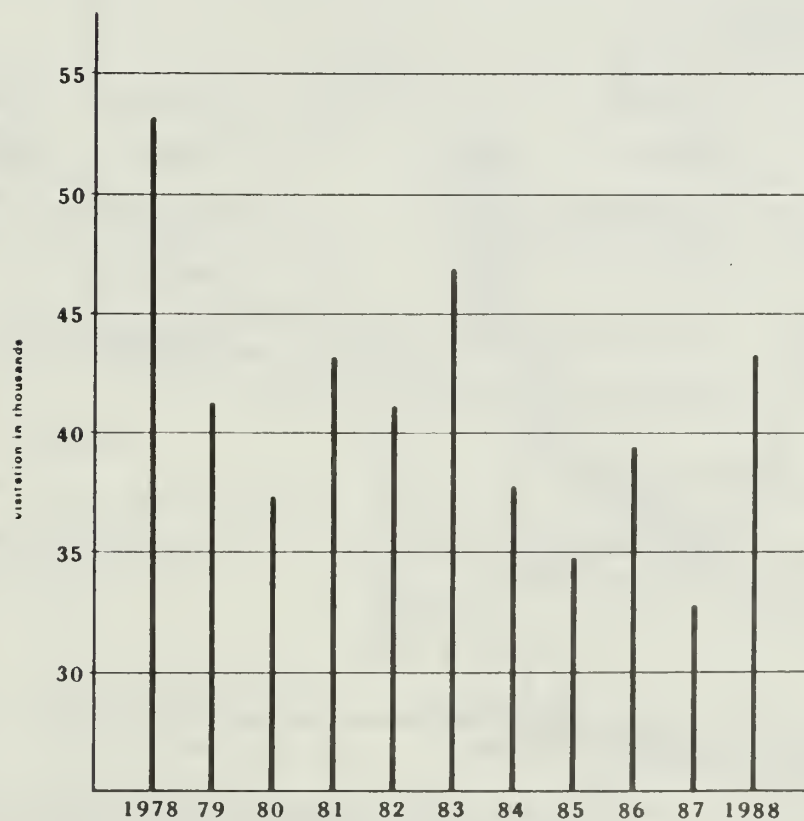
Visitor center	4,086 square feet
Fire-pumper storage	162 square feet

#### **Residences**

Quadruplex	3,493 square feet
Modular home	1,152 square feet



**Monthly Visitation - 1988**



**Annual Visitation**

**Big Hole National Battlefield**

## Utility System

Water lines total 2,340 feet of pipe and the water comes from a 250-foot deep well. The system includes a 50,000-gallon underground water storage tank.

The sewage system has 3,664 feet of pipeline connecting to two small lagoons.

The radio system consists of four hand-held Motorola units.

Telephone services are provided by the Southern Montana Telephone Company.

Power is supplied by the Vigilante Electric Cooperative (REA). A park-owned diesel generator is on site to provide power in the event of a power failure.

## Historic Structures

The four irrigation ditches total 2.1 miles and are now old enough to be considered historic structures.

## Major Park Equipment

Pickup	1 ton Ford 4X4
Tractor	diesel 37 hp
Garden tractor	17 hp
Triwheel truck	1,400 lb
Wildfire pumper on a trailer	200 gal.

## STATUS OF PLANNING

Name of Plan/Study	Preparer	Date Approved	Adequacy	Repository
Master Plan	WODC	1962	Obsolete	DSC
Cultural Resource Mgmt Plan	Park/RMRO	1987	Needs Revision	
Interpretive Prospectus	Park	1964	Obsolete	
Biological Survey of Fauna	U. of Wyoming	1988	Complete	Park
Water Rights Study	RMRO/WRB	Ongoing		

## EXISTING MANAGEMENT ZONING

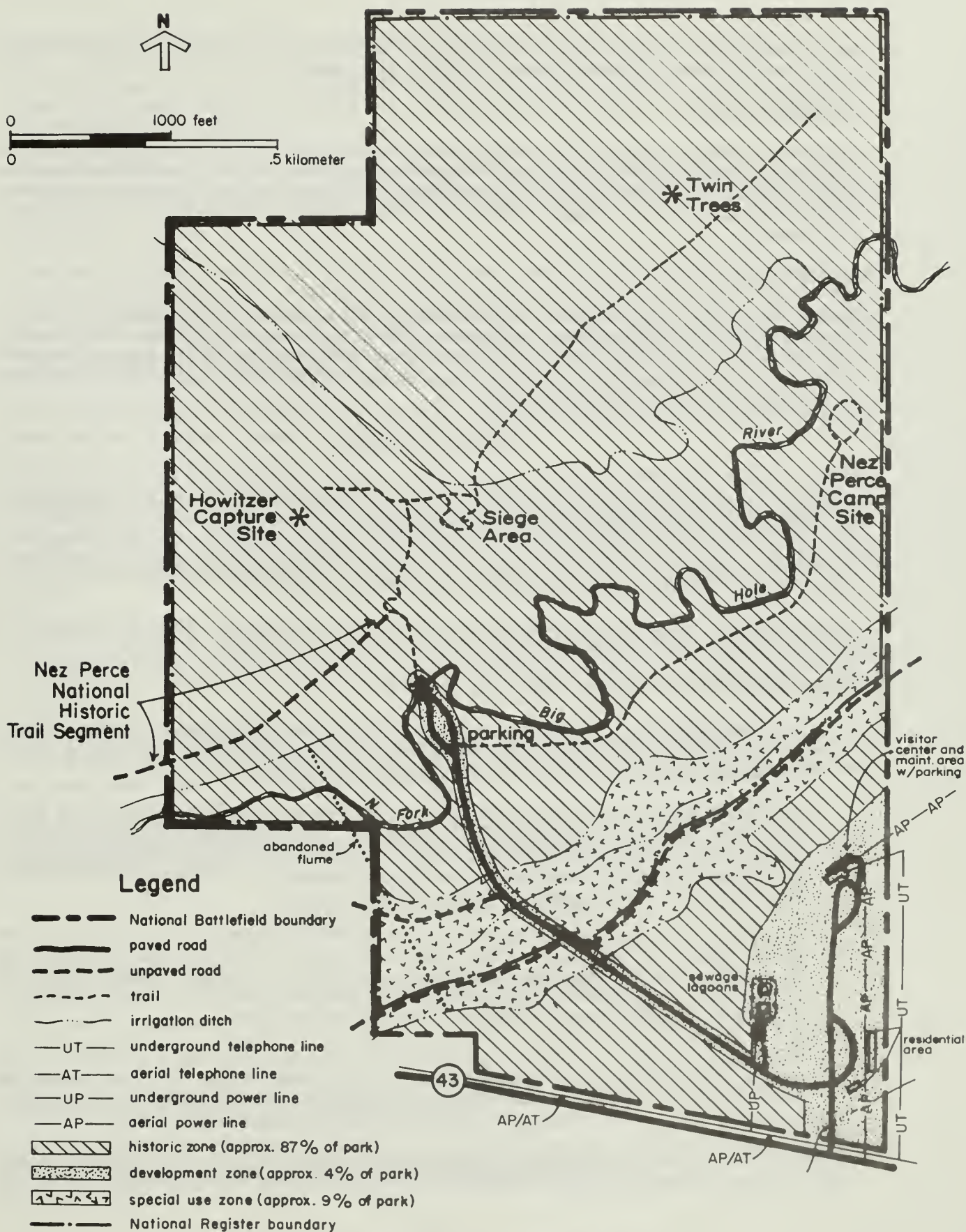
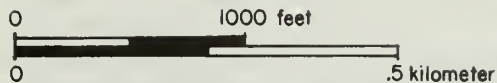
Since the battlefield is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it is classified as a Historic Zone with secondary Development and Special Use Zones.

### Historic Zone

Physical development in historic zones is limited to the minimum amount needed to preserve, protect, and interpret historical, cultural, or archeological values.

Present development within this zone includes the Battle Area Road and parking area, the Siege Area Interpretive Trail, the Howitzer Capture Site Interpretive Trail, the Nez Perce Camp Interpretive Trail, and a section of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail. Anticipated action includes some minimal





**EXISTING MANAGEMENT ZONING MAP**  
**BIG HOLE NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD - MONTANA**  
 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR - NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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work to stabilize the river bank erosion in the Nez Perce Camp area. Such development shall not detract from or adversely affect the historic, cultural or archeological values.

### **Development Zone**

These lands consist of nonhistoric park development and intensive use. The zone provides and maintains developments that serve the needs of park management and park visitors. When the battlefield was enlarged in 1963, the top of Ruby Bench was added to provide the developed area. It contains the entrance road, the visitor center, the employees' residence, the sewage lagoons, and the access road to the Battle Area parking lot.

### **Special Use Zone**

Although the park owns the land, the deeds reserve the private use of four irrigation ditches and the right of access to maintain and repair them. Three ditches are on the slope of Ruby Bench, which includes a service road. The private water right owners' vehicles wander this Special Use Zone to maintain the ditches. The ditches on the northeast and southeast corners of the battlefield do not have service roads. Each ditch has a different combination of right claimants.

## **MAJOR ISSUES**

- Protection of the archeological (cultural) resources from vandalism. A complete survey of the battlefield is mandated to locate, record, and protect these resources.
- In order to make proper natural resource plans and decisions, the battlefield will continue to maintain the base line data of the botanical and vegetative studies started in 1982.
- Base line study of the fauna of the battlefield should be continued, especially during the fall, winter, and spring, to supplement the study completed in 1988.
- Natural resource problems which need to be addressed:

The meandering river is eroding into the Nez Perce Camp Site; the riverbank is now approximately 15 feet back from where it was at the time of the battle. At present, it does not create a problem but requires repeated review to see if any changes have occurred.

The willows along the west bank of the river are not typical of those that were there at the time of the battle. The willows are oversized, full of dead wood, and have an obvious browse line from the period the land was in private ownership. Prior to the battle, natural fire passed through the willows about every 10 years, rejuvenating the above ground vegetation. A prescribed burn is scheduled for 1989 or 1990 when the conditions of the prescription are met.

In 1987 logging activity returned the tree line on the hillside to approximately what it was at the time of the battle. The open areas on the hillside were burned in 1986 and 1988 to suppress the sagebrush growth and encourage the native grasses that had dominated the hillsides at the time of the battle. A vegetative resource management program with a prescribed fire plan needs to be established to keep the trees and sagebrush from encroaching again.

The beaver population is contributing to the erosion of the riverbanks. Their dams raise the water level to make what was dry river bottom at the time of the battle very wet. This has changed the vegetative cover. The beaver population may be restrained but not eliminated. Control of the population will be done in association with the Montana Department of Fish, Game, and Parks.

- Water rights in the State of Montana have been under adjudication since 1974 without resolve as of mid-1989. The National Park Service Water Rights Division through the Department of Justice has been actively



involved in the process and will work towards retaining water rights for the battlefield when the time comes.

- An irrigation dam up river from the battlefield on Ruby Creek may be proposed. Park staff and the NPS Water Rights Division will need to monitor new proposals in order to resolve potential impacts on the battlefield and its water rights.
- The active irrigation ditches, and activity associated with the right to maintain and repair them, are highly intrusive on the historic scene. A compromise should be pursued with the owners of the rights to provide for the passage of their waters through the battlefield--yet allow the park to minimize the visual impact of the ditches.
- The geographic isolation of the battlefield requires a degree of operating self-sufficiency to serve the visitor needs and maintain the facilities. Though Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS now has administrative responsibilities over the battlefield, sufficient personnel with job skills, tools, equipment, supplies, and storage facilities to do the work are required to be on site. There is inadequate work space, storage space, and housing for the staff to safely and effectively carry out their responsibilities. The problem is compounded in the summer when the seasonal staff is onboard.

Severe winters cause an increased rate of weathering of buildings and facilities, which shortens the time span between maintenance upkeep projects.

- The north and northwest portions of the park boundary are not fenced. This allows trespass cattle to come onto the battlefield and does not provide a physical barrier to prevent hunters that are legally hunting on Beaverhead National Forest lands from accidentally crossing onto the battlefield. After the trees were cut back to approximate the tree line during the battle, the upper northeast corner of the boundary was exposed inside the bald steppe on Battle Mountain. If the northern boundary is fenced, a portion of the fence will be visible inside the bald steppe, creating a visual intrusion on the historical appearance of the scene.

Feasibility of acquiring that portion of the boundary from the Forest Service should be studied to ensure fencing of the boundary without the visual intrusion. A cooperative agreement could be considered to locate the fence on Forest Service land, but that would not prevent hunters from accidentally crossing onto park land.

- Park facilities are not accessible to handicapped visitors. Cyclic Maintenance money has been requested to install accessible toilets, stalls, and sinks but has not been received. The park will attempt to purchase and install these items in FY1989 out of their budget.
- Directional signing is inadequate or nonexistent on Highways 93, 43, and 278, and on I-15. A sign plan has been prepared and will be presented to the Montana Highway Department in Butte, Montana, for consideration and approval.

## **MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

### **NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

To maintain the historic lands and the natural resources in such a way that they approximate the scene in 1877 when the battle occurred.

To make the historical (cultural) resource available and accessible to visitors and also protect the cultural resources from adverse impact and possible loss of data.

To promote archeological, historical, and biological research to provide accurate data for management and interpretation of the resources of Big Hole National Battlefield and related areas.

## **INTERPRETATION AND VISITOR SERVICES**

To facilitate public understanding of the significance of the Battle of the Big Hole within the broader context of the Nez Perce War of 1877 through appropriate interpretive programs in the park.

To provide visitors with appropriate interpretation and understanding of the lives and feelings of the individuals involved on both sides.

To provide offsite interpretive programs during winter seasons to schools, organizations, and civic groups.

To continue to acquire copies of documents and collections related to the theme and purpose of the park, including the natural resources.

## **MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION, AND SUPPORT**

To cooperate with other Federal, State, and local agencies and individuals so that the resources of the park shall be protected from visual or physical intrusions.

## 8. Big Hole Battlefield National Monument

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### EXECUTIVE ORDER

[No. 1216—June 23, 1910]

It is hereby ordered that the E½ of the NE¼ of the SE¼ of the NW¼, sec. 24, T. 2 S., R. 17 W., Montana, containing 5 acres of unsurveyed land, as represented upon the accompanying diagram, embracing the Big Hole Battlefield Monument in Beaverhead County, be, and the same is hereby, reserved for military purposes for use in protecting said monument, in accordance with the act of Congress approved June 8, 1906 (34 Stats., 225).

WM. H. TAFT.

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
*June 23, 1910.*

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### A PROCLAMATION

[No. 2339—June 29, 1939—53 Stat. 2544]

WHEREAS the unsurveyed E½ NE¼ SE¼ NW¼ sec. 24, T. 2. S., R. 17 W., P. M., Montana, was reserved by Executive Order No. 1216 of June 23, 1910, as the Big Hole Battlefield Monument;

WHEREAS upon survey it has been found that the area intended to be reserved by that Executive order is the five-acre tract designated as the "Big Hole Battlefield Monument" on General Land Office supplemental plat of the survey of sec. 24, approved July 19, 1917, and described by metes and bounds as follows:

Beginning at a point S. 0°1' W., 5.00 chs. and N. 89°42' E., 3.00 chs. from the northwest sixteenth-section corner of Sec. 24, T. 2 S., R. 17 W., M. P. M.; thence S. 0°2' W., 10.00 chs.; S. 89°42' W., 5.00 chs.; N. 10 chs.; N. 89°42' E., 5.0 chs; to point of beginning;

WHEREAS it appears that certain public lands within the Beaverhead National Forest, adjacent to the Big Hole Battlefield Monument, are historic landmarks, forming a part of the battle grounds where Chief Joseph and a band of Nez Perce Indians were defeated by a detachment of United States Soldiers;

WHEREAS certain other public lands within the aforesaid national forest are contiguous to the said national monument and are necessary for the proper care, management, and protection of the historic landmarks included within the monument; and

WHEREAS it appears that it would be in the public interest to reserve all of the aforesaid public lands as a part of the said national monument:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, under and by virtue of the authority vested in me by the act of June 4, 1897, 30 Stat. 11, 36 (U. S. C., title 16, sec. 473), and the

act of June 8, 1906, c. 3060, 34 Stat. 225 (U. S. C., title 16, sec. 431), do proclaim that the above-mentioned Executive Order of June 23, 1910, is hereby construed in conformity with the supplemental plat of survey approved July 19, 1917, to embrace the tract described above by metes and bounds, as well as the area erroneously reserved thereby; and that the hereinafter-described lands are hereby excluded from the Beaverhead National Forest and, subject to valid existing rights, added to and made a part of the said monument, which is hereby designated as the Big Hole Battlefield National Monument:

## MONTANA PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN

T. 2 S., R. 17 W., sec. 24, lots 1 and 2, N $\frac{1}{2}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 23, E $\frac{1}{2}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;

comprising 195 acres.

Warning is hereby expressly given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

The Director of the National Park Service under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, shall have the supervision, management, and control of the monument as provided in the act of Congress entitled "An act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes," approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535, U. S. C., title 16, secs. 1 and 2), and acts supplementary thereto or amendatory thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this 29th day of June in the year of  
our Lord nineteen hundred and thirty-nine, and of the Inde-  
[SEAL] pendence of the United States of America the one hundred and  
sixty-third.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

By the President:  
CORDELL HULL,  
*The Secretary of State.*



## BIG HOLE BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT

PUBLIC LAW 88-24; 77 STAT. 18

[S. 138]

An Act to redesignate the Big Hole Battlefield National Monument, to revise the boundaries thereof, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That:*

The Big Hole Battlefield National Monument, established by Executive Order Numbered 1216 of June 23, 1910, and enlarged by Proclamation Numbered 2339 of June 29, 1939, is hereby redesignated as the Big Hole National Battlefield.

Sec. 2. In order to preserve historic features and sites associated with the Battle of the Big Hole and to facilitate their administration and interpretation, the boundaries of the Big Hole National Battlefield are hereby revised to include the following described lands:

## MONTANA PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN

Township 2 south, range 17, west: Section 13, southwest quarter southeast quarter, southeast quarter southwest quarter, east half southwest quarter southwest quarter; section 23, east half northeast quarter southeast quarter; section 24, west half east half, north half southwest quarter, southeast quarter southwest quarter, east half southwest quarter southwest quarter; section 25, those portions of the northeast quarter northwest quarter and the northwest quarter northeast quarter lying north of the north right-of-way line of relocated Montana State Route 43; consisting of approximately 466 acres.

Sec. 3. (a) The Secretary of the Interior may acquire by donation, purchase, exchange, or otherwise, lands and interests in lands within the area described in section 2 of this Act.

(b) Any lands described in section 2 of this Act that are a part of the Beaverhead National Forest when this Act takes effect are hereby excluded from the forest and added to the Big Hole National Battlefield.

(c) Lands included in the Big Hole National Battlefield pursuant to this Act shall be administered in accordance with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes", approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1-3), as amended and supplemented.

Sec. 4. There is hereby retroceded to the State of Montana, effective when accepted by said State in accordance with its laws, such jurisdiction as has been ceded by such State to the United States over any lands within the boundaries of the Big Hole National Battlefield reserving in the United States, however, concurrent legislative jurisdiction over such lands.

Sec. 5. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums not exceeding \$20,000 as are necessary for the acquisition of lands and interests in land pursuant to this Act.

Approved May 17, 1963.







